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WASHINGTON, DC—Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) announced today that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) will hold a public hearing in Oregon in August on the adverse impact an abandonment of the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) Coos Bay Line would have on the state, particularly the South Coast.

Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Springfield) announced today that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) will hold a public hearing in Oregon in August on the adverse impact an abandonment of the Central Oregon and Pacific Railroad (CORP) Coos Bay Line would have on the state, particularly the South Coast.

“This hearing will provide the Board with more information about the devastating impact of the proposed abandonment,” DeFazio said. “For decades, the rail line has provided a crucial transportation connection between Coos Bay and Eugene. Several major employers in the area depend on the rail line to get their goods to market and an abandonment of the rail line will mean the loss of jobs for many local citizens. There is widespread and significant community interest in the future of the Coos Bay line and I envision a large turnout at the hearing.”

Last September, CORP embargoed the Coos Bay line with little more than 24 hours notice. The line provides critical rail access to businesses on the South Coast and is a key transportation link for the Port of Coos Bay. Since the rail closure the average shipper along the Coos Bay Line now pays 10 – 15 percent more in shipping costs because they have to use trucks. The Port of Coos Bay has since filed an application with the Surface Transportation Board in Washington, DC to purchase the Coos Bay Line. Earlier this month CORP filed an application with the STB to abandon the line. In its decision today the STB agreed to consider CORP’s abandonment application and the Board will gather information on the local impact of any abandonment in a public hearing. DeFazio advocated for the hearing earlier this month by sending a letter to the Secretary of the STB. The letter is below. The date and location of the hearing will be announced on Friday, August 1st.

DeFazio's Letter to STB:

July 23, 2008

The Honorable Anne K. Quinlan Acting Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St. SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Docket No. AB-515 (Sub-No. 2X), *Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad, Inc. – Abandonment and Discontinuance – in Coos, Douglas, and Lane Counties, OR (Coquille to Vaughn)*

Re: Docket No. AB-515 (Sub-No. 2X), *Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad, Inc. – Abandonment and Discontinuance – in Coos, Douglas, and Lane Counties, OR (Coquille to Vaughn)*

Dear Secretary Quinlan:

I am writing to you regarding the Abandonment Application filed on July 14, 2008 by the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad (CORP) for the Coos Bay Line. I have concerns with the proposed abandonment and I request that the Surface Transportation Board hold a public hearing in Eugene, Oregon to discuss the impact that the loss of rail service would have to this rural region.

The proposed abandonment of the Coos Bay Line is a major concern for my congressional district, particularly the south coast of Oregon. For many decades, the rail line has provided a crucial transportation connection between towns such as Coquille, Coos Bay, North Bend, Reedsport, and the rest of the United States. The area is not located on an Interstate highway, does not have easy access to I-5, and includes several major employers who depend on the rail line. Any harm to these employers from an abandonment of the rail line will necessarily mean the loss of jobs for local citizens. When local citizens lose their rail-dependent jobs there is a great likelihood that additional businesses, such as retail and restaurants, will be adversely affected. In short, there is a ripple effect from the lumber and other businesses that depend on the rail line.

Due to the far-reaching consequences of CORP's proposed abandonment, I respectfully

request that the Surface Transportation Board hold a public hearing in Eugene, Oregon so that community leaders, employers, and all local citizens can voice their concerns. This meeting would provide the Board with more information regarding the broad impacts of the proposed abandonment. There is widespread and significant community interest in the future of the rail line and I envision a large turnout at any such meeting.

Sincerely,

Peter A. DeFazio

Member of Congress